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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: Financing for gender equality and the empowerment of women

Statement submitted by the National Women's Council of Catalonia (CNDC), a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

Statement

Budgets are a vital tool enabling Governments to establish strategies to implement their policies and achieve their economic and development objectives. Knowledge of how the resources of a country, region or population are allocated, managed and verified will enable us to discover the priorities that have been established; what is being spent, what it is being spent on and how it is being spent; who is appreciated and who is not; and what work is rewarded and what work is disregarded.

Government budgets are not gender neutral, since they have a different impact on women and men, and also on different groups of women and men. Men and women have different and unequal economic and social positions. Thus, ignoring gender differences when budgets are prepared will only perpetuate discriminatory differences and deepen the existing gap between men and women. This will lead us to place too much emphasis on economic values that do not take into account, for example, all the unpaid work done by women.

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Good budgetary policies require both an understanding of the impact that they will have and a rational design in order to satisfy all groups of women and men in an equal and fair manner. An impartial budget will consider the different needs, privileges, rights and obligations that women and men have in society, as well as the contributions that they make to the production of goods and services and to how resources are distributed.

Government budgets must take into consideration the value of all types and conditions of unpaid work done by women, primarily in households and in the community; work which, quite frankly, has not been considered as work until now. However, if budgets are implemented based on a theoretically traditional approach that excludes and ignores household work, care work, reproductive work and so forth — since only investment and consumption are taken into account and the importance of social issues is downplayed — then women will continue to be marginalized and gender inequality will increase.

In keeping with its commitment to incorporate a gender perspective into all of its policies and actions, the Catalan Government is providing sex-disaggregated economic data and is also developing the foundations for the implementation of gender budgets in all areas. Thanks to these efforts, we can note, for example, that expenditures on specific sports activities for women and girls account for only 1.2 per cent in the 2005 sports budget of the Catalan Sports Council (CCE) of the Government of Catalonia.[1] Economic measures are therefore needed to correct this situation.

Mention should also be made of the development of the "Satellite Account of Household Production (CSPD)",[2] an exhaustive study which provides a more complete and comprehensive picture of the economic reality of the country because, for the first time, it places an economic value on household work. This study considers households as producers and not only as consumers. It also quantifies time and gives a monetary value for the unpaid work done in Catalonian households.

Thanks to the study we can assert that if we attributed an economic value to household work, the Gross Domestic Product of Catalonia would increase by 40 per cent (a percentage which is consistent with the results of studies in other countries: the United States of America, Finland, Switzerland and Norway).

Family household work in Catalonia is equivalent to 112.3 per cent of market work time. Women's work accounts for 72 per cent of this time. It is essential to value this work in order to change perceptions to show that society appreciates such work and to bring about equity in the share of work.

The National Women's Council of Catalonia (CNDC), in our capacity as the participative and consultative body of the Catalan Institute for Women, comprises 303 women's entities and groups from all over the territory of Catalonia. Our diversity is shown by who these women are: migrant women, women with disabilities, old and young women, and professional women of all profiles. We

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[1] Núria Rodríguez Planas. *Protocol d'anàlisi de la despesa pública des de la perspectiva de gènere* (Protocol for analysing public expenditure on the gender perspective). Government of Catalonia. Catalan Institute for Women.

[2] Cristina Carrasco Bengoa and Mònica Serrano Gutiérrez. *Compte satèl•lit de la producció domèstica (CSPD) de les llars de Catalunya 2001. Government of Catalonia, 2001.* Catalan Institute for Women.

believe that initiatives to set budgets from a gender perspective promote the transparency of the budgetary process and achieve a higher level of efficiency and effectiveness in public expenditure management. This is not a magic formula but it will enable us to outline the structural changes necessary for the achievement of de facto equal opportunities for men and women.

CNDC therefore calls for the implementation of gender budgets as useful tools:

- For making Governments and society at large aware of the impact of budgets on gender;
- For evaluating whether Governments are meeting their commitments to women's policies; and
- For changing policies and budgets with the aim of improving the economic and social situation of women.